

Madame Mayor Cooper
Members of Collingwood Council
Ms. Sara Almas, Clerk
P.O. Box 157
97 Hurontario Street
Collingwood, Ontario
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Thursday August 16, 2012

**TO BE READ INTO THE PUBLIC RECORD REGARDING RECREATION FACILITIES
IN COLLINGWOOD – COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY AUGUST 27TH, 2012**

Dear Madame Mayor and Members of Council;

I continue to be very pleased that the issue of the provision of recreation facilities for the residents of Collingwood is a high priority for this Council. As you know the Phase One Steering Committee was charged with the task of developing a design scenario for Central Park only. Having been a co-chair of the Steering Committee for Phase One of the project was a privilege and allowed me the opportunity to hear firsthand what is important to the residents. New options (and there are many) on the table are a good thing and I look forward to the detailed comparative analysis of 2 of the options to be presented on August 27th, 2012. I am respectful of the work at hand to compare the merits and challenges of each facility scenario, capital and operating costs of the two facility types – a multi-purpose recreation community centre versus 3 separate buildings (one indoor pool at Heritage Park, refurbish Eddie Bush and build a separate ice pad at Central Park). I would like to offer my comments as a resident, an expert and a long time professional and consultant in this field to ensure that the comparisons receive the due diligence they deserve. I offer you the following information to assist with the process and it goes without saying that I would be pleased to continue my volunteerism and assist in any way possible.

Capital Budget

The comparative factors must include:

- Site servicing costs for all facilities; these are included in the Central Park capital budget
- Parking space requirements, and cost to develop/expand parking at Heritage Park – an indoor pool will require significant parking.

- A 20% contingency was applied to the Central Park Community Recreation Centre of 6M dollars and therefore would need to be applied to the combined costs of the other projects. If the cost as reported by the media is 10M dollars, an additional 2M dollar cost factor would need to be applied to compare apples to apples (or take the 6M dollar contingency out of the Central Park capital budget reducing the costs to 28M).
- The legislative requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires full access at both the indoor pool scenario and to the Eddie Bush arena.
- The pool at Central Park included a therapy pool for our older adults/ persons with disabilities and a teaching pool for children, this must be factored either into the costs of the covered outdoor pool or removed from the costs for the Central Park complex.
- The arenas in the Central Park conceptual design included a walking track and seating for 500. These design elements must be either included in any new design or the budget costing removed from the Central Park capital costing to ensure and ‘apples to apples” comparison.
- If the costs for temporary structures are remotely close to the costs for the permanent structure; we must consider the lifespan of the structure types. The public will need to see this detail in order to provide further input.
- I look forward to seeing the preceding comparators in the analysis.

Operating Budget Comparison

I have completed an operating cost analysis of the two different facility scenarios. As stated during my deputation before Council at the last meeting to discuss this issue; there are clear efficiencies with operating multiple facilities under one roof; one crew of three staff versus three crews of nine staff in total, one ice resurfacing machine (@ \$75,000 each) versus two, shared administration, energy efficiencies between facility types and most importantly one stop shopping for young families, the elderly and disabled residents. The following budget figures reflect true operating costs for both facility scenarios. I can state these numbers with great confidence as I was responsible for 870 recreation facilities in my position as General Manager of Parks and Recreation for the City of Toronto and through my consulting business for many municipalities in

Ontario the size of Collingwood. The figures for Eddie Bush and a twin pad have been taken from the Central Park Development Project Report and are reflective of actual costs.

COMPARISON OF ANNUAL OPERATING DEFICITS – NET LOSSES		
	OPTION 1 - CENTRAL PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE	OPTION 2 - THREE SEPERATE FACILITIES
Eddie Bush Arena	N/A	373,900
Indoor Pool	60,000. Operating deficit covered by the YMCA	380,000
Single Pad Arena	N/A	200,000
Double Pad Arena	270,000	N/A
Net Annual Losses	\$330,000.	\$953,900

You can surmise very quickly that the Community Recreation Centre scenario through the partnership with the YMCA and the efficiency of a new twin pad arena is the most fiscally responsible scenario for the taxpayers of Collingwood. An additional \$625,000 would have to be levied to the taxpayer on an annual basis to support three different recreation facilities in three different locations.

Planning Issues

The planning issues for the Heritage Park pool site are significant and need to be addressed before this option can be considered viable.

- The height restrictions must be addressed as the height of a temporary building covering the pool will impede neighbouring resident's view of the park/ mountain and access to sunlight, as well we suspect the coverage will come very close to the road and may require a setback variance. At the very least a public meeting must be held with neighbouring residents to receive their thoughts on this issue.
- The parking requirements for the pool will be significant; the bathing capacity of 170 swimmers will need to be addressed as part of the use of the park, which is already programmed quite heavily (baseball, Dog Park, BMX track, new fire hall etc.).

Public Input

The Central Park recreation community centre plan went out to the public to hear their views in a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach including;

- A blog site where people were kept current on the project and could continually offer their comments
- 2 electronic survey for all residents
- A community stakeholder survey
- 2 sets of interview rounds with key sport, recreation, senior and children's groups
- 2 public meetings

Any other options including phasing, and the scenario of 3 separate buildings in three separate locations need to receive the same public input process for the Central Park scenario to properly and fairly allow the voice of the public to be heard. Any new scenarios that represent a drastic and dramatic change from the Central Park scenario will require significant opportunities for input.

It should be noted that at no time in the Phase One process did we hear that urgency is a primary concern to the development of facilities. Residents know that facility developments of this magnitude take time and the overwhelming message was to keep all the amenities together under one roof to provide for many uses at the same time for families, young children, persons with disabilities and seniors and further an important direction was that common spaces needed to be included in order to build community pride and cohesion.

Temporary Structures

In my research to investigate temporary structures, I spoke with John Frittenburg of the JF Group who is one of Canada's foremost consultants on sport and recreation facilities. His clear guidance to us was to complete significant research on these structures as they can be as costly as permanent structures and are not all conducive to a recreation and sport setting. Some have been known to create internal rain and health and safety issues due to air handling concerns in pool and arena settings.

Infrastructure Funding

At the most recent consultations on the next round of infrastructure funding the governments were offered the following advice by the Parks and Recreation Ontario (professional organization representing parks, recreation and culture in Ontario) – *“Encourage municipalities to get their community centre projects ground ready (working drawings) so that they are eligible for funding, have had a chance to put their own funding reserves aside and are therefore able to expedite their projects”.*

General Comments

I want to reiterate the fact that many municipalities struggle with the dilemma of fixing up ageing facilities and/or developing new ones. The capital costs (not having to replace facilities shortly after spending funds to refurbish them); the operating efficiencies (multi-facilities under one roof / staffing/ best use of the tax dollar) and meeting the long term needs of the residents are clearly the deciding factors and in most cases have won out the day.

Proposed Council Motion

I would offer you the following motion for consideration:

“That Council complete the development of a funding model for the Central Park Recreation Community Centre through a Phase Two Steering Committee and consider other facility development options including phasing if and only if a successful funding model cannot be developed,

That a complete comparative analysis be developed of priority options for consideration including capital and operating costs, impact on the tax payer, including public consultation responses garnered in the process and recommended next steps,

And further that the Phase Two Steering Committee report back to Council by December 31st 2012 on their findings.”

Closing Comments

There seems to be significant interest and energy surrounding the issue of developing the right community recreation centre for Collingwood. It is time that we use this collective energy for the greater good of the residents. I strongly suggest that a public meeting to gather input on the options at hand would be a timely and inclusive gesture. I would be happy to assist in facilitating this meeting to capture a common vision and the best approach forward for Collingwood.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Tucker-Reid